

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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a California Way of Life.*



May 19, 2022

Daniel Wall
City of Vernon
4305 S. Santa Fe Avenue
Vernon CA, 90058

RE: Vernon Westside Specific Plan –
Notice of Preparation of an
Environmental Impact Report (NOP)
SCH # 2022040458
GTS # 07-LA-2022-03923

Dear Daniel Wall:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced NOP. The Proposed Specific Plan is the preparation of a Specific Plan to spur development of people-centric environments that attract talent and stimulate innovation in the western portion of the City of Vernon. The purpose is to reinvigorate the City's competitive advantage as a center of production; strengthen and provide long-term stability to the City's fiscal position; increase the residential population; diversify and reorient the Westside's land uses to take advantage of changes in the economic landscape of Southern California; increase amenities available to local residents and workers; and create a physical environment that is supportive of diverse land uses, welcoming to the larger region, and enhancing to the City's image and identity. The Proposed Specific Plan is being developed as part of the implementation of the 2021-2029 Housing Element (currently in draft form) and was included as Program 8: Westside Specific Plan. The City of Vernon is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The Plan Area includes approximately 840 acres located in the western portion of the City of Vernon five miles south of downtown Los Angeles, California.

According to the NOP, it is anticipated that implementation of the Proposed Specific Plan has the potential to result in significant environmental effects to certain topics, including to Transportation, associated with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Thus, these will be analyzed in detail in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Additionally, Caltrans would request the study of the State facilities on/off-ramps and any arising inadequate weaving or queue spillback onto State facilities. We look forward to reviewing these analyses.

As a reminder, Senate Bill 743 (2013) mandates that Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) be used as the primary metric in identifying transportation impacts of all future projects under CEQA, starting July 1, 2020. For information on determining transportation impacts in terms of VMT on

the State Highway System, see the Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA by the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), dated December 2018. Caltrans has published the VMT-focused Transportation Impact Study Guide (TISG), dated May 20, 2020, and the Caltrans Interim Local Development and Intergovernmental Review (LD-IGR) Safety Review Practitioners Guidance, prepared on December 18, 2020. Caltrans' new TISG is largely based on the OPR 2018 Technical Advisory. You can review these resources online at:

- http://opr.ca.gov/docs/20190122-743_Technical_Advisory.pdf
- <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/sb743/2020-05-20-approved-vmt-focused-tisg-a11y.pdf>
- <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/sb743/2020-12-22-updated-interim-ldigr-safety-review-guidance-a11y.pdf>

We encourage the Lead Agency to evaluate the potential of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) applications to better manage the transportation network, as well as transit service and bicycle or pedestrian connectivity improvements. For TDM strategies, please refer to the Federal Highway Administration's Integrating Demand Management into the Transportation Planning Process: A Desk Reference (Chapter 8). This reference is available online at: <http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop12035/fhwahop12035.pdf>

Caltrans also encourages Lead Agencies to promote alternative transportation. This will increase accessibility and decrease Greenhouse Gas Emissions, which supports Caltrans' mission to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. For additional strategies that will promote equity and environmental preservation, please refer to the 2010 Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures report by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA), which is available online at: <http://www.capcoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/CAPCOA-Quantification-Report-9-14-Final.pdf>

If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Ronnie Escobar, the project coordinator, at Ronnie.Escobar@dot.ca.gov, and refer to GTS # 07-LA-2022-03923.

Sincerely,



MIYA EDMONSON
LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

cc: State Clearinghouse